

Message Text

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14

ACTION L-03

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CCO-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09

NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 IO-12 COA-02 EB-11

ACDA-19 AGR-20 CG-00 COME-00 DOTE-00 FMC-04 INT-08

JUSE-00 NSF-04 OMB-01 RSR-01 /146 W
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O 160907 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6831

USMISSION USUN IMMEDIATE

RUEIKOBFAMEMBASSY TOKYO 4087

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 1636

USUN FOR SEABED DELEGATION

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, KS, CH

SUBJECT, LOS: KOREAN STATEMENT ON CHINESE SEABED RESOURCE

CLAIM

REF: A. SEOUL 1597 B. SEOUL 1630

SUMMARY: ROKG ISSUES STATEMENT CONTESTING PRC STATEMENT ON
YELLOW

EAST CHINA SEAS CONTINENTAL SHELF OIL EXPLORATION. ROKG
OFFERS BEGIN DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WITH PRC, BUT DOES NOT
SPECIFY MEANS. END SUMMARY.

1. ROKG FOREIGN MINISTRY CALLED IN U. S. AND JAPANESE
EMBASSY OFFICIALS LATE AFTERNOON MARCH 16 TO HAND OVER
COPIES OF ROKG STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO MARCH 15 PRC
STATEMENT ON KOREA AND SEABED RESOURCES REPORTED REFTEL A.
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C REAN STATEMENT REAFFIRMED THAT AREA UNDER EXPLORATION AND EXPLOITATION PROGRAMS ARE WITHIN ROK'S JURISDICTION IN ACCORD WITH INTERNATIONAL LAW. ROKG FURTHER DECLARED WILLINGNESS TO ENTER INTO DISCUSSIONS WITH PRC AUTHORITIES ON QUESTION OF DELINEATING CONTINENTAL SHELF AREAS.

2. IN HANDING OVER COPIES OF STATEMENT, MOFA NORTH ASIAN SECTION CHIEF, PARK SOO GIL SAID THAT FOREIGN MINISTER HAD JUST RELEASED STATEMENT AT PRESS CONFERENCE. PARK STRESSED THAT THIS WAS FIRST TIME ROKG HAD USED TERM "PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF CHINA" AND FIRST TIME ROKG HAD STATED WILLINGNESS TO ENTER INTO DISCUSSIONS WITH PRC. REPORTERS CONCENTRATED THEIR QUESTIONS ON POLITICAL ASPECTS. PARK STATED THAT ANY DISCUSSIONS WHICH MIGHT ENSUE WOULD BE LIMITED TO AREA WHICH COULD GIVE RISE TO CONTROVERSY AND WOULD NOT ENCOMPASS ENTIRE CONTINENTAL SHELF. HE HAD NO INFORMATION ON HOW CONTACT WOULD BE MADE. PRC USE OF "SOUTH KOREAN AUTHORITIES" IS STANDARD* HE SAID. HE

SURMISED THAT THE REAL OBJECTIVE OF CHINESE STATEMENT RELATED TO EAST CHINA SEA WHERE OIL RESERVES THOUGHT TO BE SIZEABLE. HE THOUGHT PRC MIGHT BE USING STATEMENT TO SCUTTLE JAPAN/ KOREAN NEGOTIATIONS ON DISPUTED SEABED AREAS EAST CHINA SEA SINCE TIMING OF STATEMENT CONSISTANT WITH SUCH INTERPRETATION. PARK DESCRIBED FORMIN STATEMENT AS "EPOCH MAKING IN THE ANNALS OF KOREAN DIPLOMACY". HE SAID THAT PRESIDENT PARK HAD APPROVED ISSUANCE OF STATEMENT.

COMMENT: STATEMENT OPENS WAY FOR POSSIBLE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN SOUTH KOREAN/ CHINESE POLITICAL RELATIONS AS WELL AS FOR RESOLUTION OF CONTENENTAL SHELF DISPUTE IF PRC RESPONDS FAVORABLY. KOREANS BELIEVE STATEMENT SUPPORTS THEIR SEABED CLAIM WHILE ENCOURAGING CHINESE TO OPEN DIALOGUE. UNDERHILL

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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